

Why a Child Uses Drugs

Understandably, some parents of drug users think that their child might have been pressured into taking drugs by peers or drug dealers. But children say they choose to use drugs because they want to:

- relieve boredom
- feel good
- forget their troubles and relax
- have fun
- satisfy their curiosity
- take risks
- ease their pain
- feel grown-up
- show their independence
- belong to a specific group
- look cool.

Rather than being influenced by new friends whose habits they adopt, children and teens often switch peer groups so they can hang around with others who have made the same lifestyle choices.

Parents know their children best and are therefore in the best position to suggest healthy alternatives to doing drugs. Sports, clubs, music lessons, community service projects, and after-school activities not only keep children and teens active and interested, but also bring them closer to parents who can attend games and performances. To develop a positive sense of independence, you could encourage babysitting or tutoring. For a taste of risk-taking, suggest rock-climbing, karate, or camping.

Courtesy U.S. Department of Education: Growing Up Drug-Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention - 1998